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Message Text

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53
ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15 INT-08

DODE-00 SAM-01 DRC-01 /076 W
---------- 053801
R 171405Z JUN 74
FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN
TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC 1280
INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT LEBANON
COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 0420

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS : ELAB, BA
SUBJECT : LABOR DISPUTE AT ALUMINUM BAHRAIN (ALBA)

SUMMARY: GOB JUSTIFIES ITS FIRM ACTION IN DEALING WITH LABOR PROBLEMS AT ALBA AS PROTAECTING LIVELIHOOD AND INVESTMENT OF BAHRAINIS AGAINST THOSE WHO WOULD EXPLOIT WORKERS FOR POLITICAL AIMS. WORK AT ALBA BACK TO NEAR NORMAL: END SUMMARY

1. AFTER A SERIES OF LABOR DISPUTES AT ALUMINUM BAHRAIN (ALBA) EARLIER THIS MONTH, A GROUP OF WORKERS QUIT WORK ON JUNE 14 AND REFUSED TO LEAVE THEIR PLACES. AFTER AN EMERGENCY CABINET MEETING THAT EVENING, FOUR CABINET MINISTERS MET WITH THE WORKERS UNTIL EARLY MORNING JUNE 15 TRYING TO PERSUADE THEM TO RETURN TO WORK, BUT WITH NO RESULTS. ON JUNE 15, THE GOB ISSUED A PUBLIC STATEMENT POINTING OUT THAT THE ACTION WAS HARMFUL TO THE LIVELIHOOD OF THE BAHRAINI WORKERS AND ATTACKING THE STRIKE ORGANIZERS FOR POLITICAL OBJECTIVES WHICH HELD NO CONNECTION WITH THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING CLASS. THE CABINET ALSO AUTHORIZED THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR TO TAKE ALL NECESSARY STEPS TO ENFORCE LAW AND ORDER.

2. RIOT POLICE DISPERSED ABOUT 80 STRIKERS BY FIRING RUBBER BULLETS AND THE SITUATION WAS BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL. ACCORDING TO ALBA
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AUTHORITIES, THE REMAINING WORKERS VOLUNTEERED TO WORK 12 HOUR

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SHIFTS AND NO PRODUCTION WAS LOST. OPERATIONS WERE BACK TO NEAR NORMAL BY JUNE 16. THE POLICE HAVE ARRESTED A TOTAL OF ABOUT 31 INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEMBER EBRAHIM AL-KHALIF
A
(BLACK SHEEP OF THE RULING FAMILY) AND SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE SELF PROCLAIMED "TRADE UNION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE", WHICH HAD HOPED TO BE THE NUCLEUS OF A TRADE UNION.

3. COMMENT: THE GRANTING OF SUCH WIDE POWERS TO THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR IS LIKELY TO CAUSE A REACTION FROM THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. THROUGHOUT THE PROBLEMS THE GOB HAS STRESSED THAT IT WAS ACTING ONLY TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF THE WORKERS AND BAHRAIN'S INVESTMENT IN ALBA. IF THE GOVT COMES OUT A WINNER ON THIS ISSUE IT SHOULD INCREASE ITS ABILITY TO DEAL WPYH THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON OTHER ISSUES
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR STRIKES, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, INDUSTRIAL PLANTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 JUN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: WorrelSW
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974MANAMA00420
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740157-0537
From: MANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740639/aaaabhrd.tel
Line Count: 77
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: WorrelSW
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14-Aug-2002 by worrelsw>; APPROVED <11 MAR 2003 by WorrelSW>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: : LABOR DISPUTE AT ALUMINUM BAHRAIN (ALBA) SUMMARY: GOB JUSTIFIES ITS FIRM ACTION IN DEALING WITH LABOR PROBLEMS
TAGS: ELAB, BA, ALUMINUM BAHRAIN-ALBA, ALBA-ALUMINUM BAHRAIN, (AL-KHALIF, EBRAHIM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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